

The Examiner pointed out that the Abstract should be in narrative form and generally limited to a single paragraph on a separate sheet within the range of 50 to 250 words. Applicants have amended the Abstract and submit that the amended Abstract is acceptable.

The Examiner objected to the disclosure, pointing out that reference numeral 12 at page 4, line 30 is used previously and contending that the sentence at page 5, lines 24-26 is awkwardly phrased. Applicants have amended page 4, line 30 by deleting the reference numeral 12. Moreover, the sentence at page 5, lines 24-26 has been reworded to overcome the objection.

Claims 1-22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, the Examiner contending that the claims contain subject matter which was not described in the Specification in such a way as to enable one skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and/or use the invention. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Applicants submit that the Specification does make it clear how the apparatus sorts and randomizes a deck of cards. As the Specification makes clear at pages 4-5, the apparatus of the present invention comprises an input means for receiving playing cards. The apparatus also includes an identification means for reading indicia to determine the identity of individual playing cards. Identification means for reading indicia transmits information to the control means identifying each playing card. The control means is preferably a computer comprising a microprocessor programmed to receive such information from the identification means and determines the identity of each card based on the information received from the identification means, compares the identity of the card to a list of cards in a set. As the cards are identified, they are each directed to a slot in the buffer

means, for temporarily holding the cards until the control means determines whether a complete set of cards has been identified by the identification means. After determining that there is a complete set of cards, the control means either randomizes the order of cards by randomly ejecting the cards from the slots in the buffer means into the stacking means, or ejects the cards in "new deck" order. The cards may then be physically removed from the apparatus.

Moreover, since the apparatus is capable of identifying sets of cards which are not always 52 in number, the representative buffer means shown in Fig. 1 was not provided with a specific number of slots. It is clear from the disclosure that the buffer means, in a preferred embodiment, would contain a slot for each card in a set. Identification means identifies cards one by one, the information is then transferred to the control means and the cards inserted into single slots in the buffer means while control means tabulates the data from identification means to determine that a full set of cards has been received. Thereafter, the control means can be programmed to eject the cards one by one into the stacking means in either randomized order or in new deck order, as the Specification makes clear. In view of the above comments, Applicants respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn.

The Examiner also pointed out that no mention is made in the Specification that Pan-9 decks, Caribbean stud decks, California blackjack decks or super-Pan-9 decks could be used for the identity of such decks. As pointed out by the Examiner, these specific decks of cards were listed in claim 10. Applicants have amended the Specification at page 5, line 13 by inserting text supported by original claim 10 to overcome this rejection. Accordingly, Applicants submit that this rejection should be withdrawn.

The Examiner also pointed out that the Specification does not mention that the physical integrity of the cards can be checked or how the physical integrity would be checked. Claim 16 of the Application clearly states that the apparatus of the present invention may further include a means to determine the physical integrity of cards, the physical integrity comprising one or more factors selected from bent, torn, nicked, and marked, and optionally including means to physically eject any card determined to lack the physical integrity. Applicants submit that one skilled in the art would readily understand the many means capable of determining the physical integrity of cards. Moreover, Applicants have amended the Specification at page 5, line 30 by inserting text supported by original claim 16 to overcome this rejection. Accordingly, Applicants submit that this rejection should be withdrawn.

The Examiner also contended that the Specification fails to mention that the sorted order is the same order as found in fresh, new decks. Applicants respectfully disagree. Applicants direct the Examiner's attention to, for example, page 4, lines 23-24 of the Specification which states that the control means is adapted to either randomize the order of cards ejected into the means for receiving cards or sort the cards into "new deck" order. Accordingly, Applicants submit that this rejection should be withdrawn.

The Examiner also contended that the Specification fails to mention that the specific number of decks the apparatus can handle is between 1 and 10. At page 5, line 12 of the Specification, it is stated that the set of cards provided to the apparatus preferably consists of one or more decks, each of which has an array of cards customary for the card game being played. Applicants have amended

page 5, line 12 by inserting text supported by original claim 18. Accordingly, Applicants submit that the rejections should be withdrawn.

Also, the Examiner asserted that the Specification fails to mention that any printer could be used with the system or what sort of verification data would be printed. Applicants have amended page 5, line 30 of the Specification by inserting text to support the subject matter of claim 19. Accordingly, Applicants submit that this rejection should be withdrawn.

Claims 1-22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Initially, Applicants have amended claim 1, line 6 to make it clear that the cards are directed from the input means into slots in the buffer means.

Applicants have also amended claim 1 as suggested by the Examiner by replacing the text starting with "the apparatus adapted" with the text suggested by the Examiner. Applicants submit that not only does this overcome the indefiniteness rejection regarding lines 11-12 of claim 1, the amendment also provides the essential structural cooperative relationships of how the control means and identification means interact with the other means of the apparatus. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that this rejection should be withdrawn.

Applicants appreciate that the Examiner has indicated that the claimed subject matter is allowable over the prior art made of record.

As all issues raised in the Office Action have been addressed, Applicants request issuance of a Notice of Allowance directed to claims 1-22. Should the Examiner have any questions, the Examiner is invited to telephone Applicants' undersigned representative.

Respectfully submitted,



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